

Youth Get Hands-On Experience in Construction & Industrial Trades Careers



Over 200 students from Marquette and Alger Counties participated in the 2008 Industrial Trades Career Day held April 25th at Lakeview Arena. High school juniors and seniors experienced hands-on activities and explored career opportunities within the trades.

"We are like any other industry. We are going to have to work hard to replace the people currently in the industry, and this is part of that process," stated Mike Thibault of the Construction and Building Trades.

Brian O'Neil of Carpenters 1510 added, "These kids are our future. Without them stepping up to help us out in the near future, we're not going to have the workers we need

to get the job done."

According to the Construction Labor Research Council's latest report, the construction industry is in need of nearly 200,000 new skilled workers annually over the next 10 years. The Industrial Trades Career Day is a cooperative effort between partnering organizations such as The Upper Peninsula Construction and Skilled Trades Regional Skills Alliance (RSA), The Upper Peninsula Construction Council (UPCC), Michigan Works! The Job Force Board and the local trades.

Throughout the day, students explored their interests by participating in exhibits such as: bricklaying, concrete finishing,

welding, carpentry, iron working and many more. They talked to trade professionals and learned what a typical workday is like.

The inaugural Industrial Trades Career Day took place in October of 2006 at the NewPage facility in Escanaba with an audience of 212 Delta and Schoolcraft County students. The goal is to provide an Industrial Trades Career Day to all regions of the Upper Peninsula. "Due to retirements and job growth in the industry, we will be experiencing a manpower shortage," commented Tony Retaskie, Executive Director of UPCC and Job Force Board member. "It is important for us to spread the word to students across the Upper Peninsula that there are high-paying jobs right here in the UP."

"Career Day was not just a day to get out of school, but had so many different trades to try out. It was the hands-on experience I liked the most."
-Devin Ray, Negaunee High School

"I have experienced a lot from coming here. I've enjoyed every minute of it. I plan on becoming a welder when I graduate. I've never been able to use a lot of the tools that were there so that was a real experience."
-Erin Chable, Marquette High School

"Career Day was very interesting and educational. I liked that they allowed you to try all the different trades. I learn a lot better through hands-on, so that was a very cool thing. I got a lot of interesting job opportunities which helped me think about my future plans."
-Tyler Taseris, Negaunee High School

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